



U.S. Department of Justice

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EVENT: Guilty Pleas

Defendant: Tocco et al

FIVE AREA MEN PLEAD GUILTY TO RACKETEERING

Five men from the Metro-Detroit area entered pleas of guilty today and on Wednesday, March 14, 2007, to federal charges relating to a racketeering conspiracy involving a multi-million dollar sport bookmaking operation, money laundering, collection of credit by extortionate means and interstate transportation in aid of racketeering, United States Attorney Stephen J. Murphy announced.

Murphy was joined in the announcement by Andrew G. Arena, Special Agent in Charge for the Federal Bureau of Investigation in Detroit, Michigan.

Three of the men, Peter Dominic Tocco, 59 of Troy, Michigan, Peter Joseph Messina, 51 of Roseville, Michigan and Thomas James Mackey, 50 of Clinton Township, entered guilty pleas before United States District Judge Avern Cohn on March 14, 2007 to a racketeering conspiracy involving a multi-million dollar sport bookmaking operation, money laundering, collection of credit by extortionate means and interstate transportation in aid of racketeering. Today, John William Manettas, 52 of Harrison Township pleaded guilty to the same charge as

Tocco, Messina and Mackey, while Wayne Joseph Kassab, 50 of Sterling Heights pleaded guilty to Count Two of the Indictment alleging a Racketeering Conspiracy to collect an unlawful debt. As part of the guilty pleas, the defendants agreed to a criminal forfeiture which included a judgment against them for \$3,000,000.00, forfeiture of assets of the business utilized to launder money, as well as the equity interests in their homes.

United States Attorney Murphy stated, "The heyday of racketeering, extortion, money laundering, illegal sport bookmaking and gambling by organized criminal groups may very well have passed us by, as demonstrated by today's guilty pleas. The diligent work of not only the FBI, but also the Michigan State Police and the Fraser Police Department, has brought down the curtain on this illegal operation."

Information presented in court at the time of the plea showed that from 1998 until 2006, a criminal enterprise operated in the Eastern District of Michigan that involved a large scale sports bookmaking operation and the collection of unlawful debts associated with that operation. The racketeering conspiracy to which defendants Tocco, Messina, Mackey and Manettas pleaded guilty involved multiple crimes including laundering the proceeds of the illegal gambling business through legitimate businesses operated by several of the defendants, interstate transportation in aid of racketeering and collection of debts through unlawful use of threats, either implied or direct.

Wayne Kassab's plea to Count Two involved a racketeering conspiracy to collect gambling debts.

The pleas culminated a long term investigation into organized crime in Metropolitan Detroit which included court-authorized electronic surveillance.

As the Detroit, FBI Office has stated, Organized Crime has been and remains a top priority of the FBI and the activities of any criminal organization will be rigorously pursued.

United States Attorney Murphy commended the excellent investigative work of the FBI,

the Fraser Police Department and Michigan State Police which lead to this successful prosecution, and he paid special praise to the work of the prosecutors in his office who handled the case.